

# Marble House

*hollywoodgrrl*

Achievement in Use of Music: Shortlist 2009

Achievement in Innovation: Shortlist 2009

Achievement in Vidding: Shortlist 2009

The review below may contain spoilers for new Doctor Who up to The Next Doctor.

**Nicky:** The scope of Marble House simply astounds me. From the extreme macro of the TARDIS traveling to the edges of the known universe, to the very fine microcosm of an English public school perched on the edge of World War I, this vid darts from one to the other effortlessly, drawing on various external sources and text to make everything cohere.

**Brad:** It looks and feels sweeping and epic, at once a statement about the central character, about the universe of the show, and about the nature of humanity in general. I'm astounded by the sheer audacity of the concept, before even getting into the elegant aesthetic beauty of the presentation, which to me is equally impressive - and that's saying something.

**Nicky:** One thing that particularly fascinates me about this vid is the intricate assignment of narratorship, which changes almost at every turn. Beginning with the Doctor in the introduction with the use of textual quotes, to Martha in the first verse, to John in the second verse, to Latimer becoming privy to the Doctor's past and future via the fob watch in the instrumental bridge, to a brief interlude from the Family of Blood and then back to Martha again, this is a comprehensive tour of many of the points of view in the Family of Blood 2-episode arc, lending gravity and credibility to each person's motive and subsequent actions.

Structurally, this vid is a thing of beauty. If I may be so trite with my metaphor, it really does remind me of a watch, full of ticking cogs and wheels that rely on everything else fitting together perfectly in order to function as a whole.

**Brad:** One of the most memorable parts for me is the opening segment (to 0:50), with all of the space footage, the text, and the introduction of the TARDIS. Not only is it eye-searingly gorgeous, just from the opening you learn more about the Doctor than you do from most full vids. And all without ever actually seeing him.

It's amazing how well the vidder uses text - not as an *addition* to the footage, but in a way that makes it feel like it's part of the source. It's not just laid on top. It gets folded into the tapestry in an artistic way that actually enhances the visual impact of the source. In terms of narrative, hollywoodgrrl's use of text feels a lot like hearing choice segments of audio from the show, but incorporated in a way that's less clumsy and more poetic.

I've never seen anyone use text this well in a vid. Except maybe hollywoodgrrl in other vids.

**Nicky:** I fear I'll just go on forever if I start analysing each segment in detail, so let me just touch on a few aspects which I especially loved. The use of shapes and positioning in transitions is masterful, from Gallifrey melting into a black hole and then the time vortex at

0:13 - 0:15, to the birth and death of Earth at 0:45 - 0:48, to Martha dissolving into the watch at 3:38. Along with the dynamic colour palette, the transitions really help to blend everything together and make the complex narrative that much easier to process. On a somewhat related note, I also absolutely loved the visual correlation at 4:09 as though the Doctor is physically tapping on John's mind, waiting to be let in.

The external source, especially the black and white WWI footage, is striking with its added layer of realism. I especially love the gorgeous pull out at 1:01, and the inspired speed changes from 1:11 - 1:15.

**Brad:** The musicality is so incredibly intricate, with such amazing attention to detail. It feels like it's addressing every layer at every moment, using a huge variety of editing tools - from internal and external motion, to dramatic time toggle, to source effects. Whether it's something like the little time toggle at 2:39 or the turning dial as the music builds at 4:05, it's all attached to every note, as well as to the overall flow of the song.

**Nicky:** The use of music is frequently surprising and gorgeous, from the wide open space shots to the establishing synths at the start, to the crisp effects work on the drum machine around the 2:17 mark, to the amazingly beautiful instrumental bridge beginning at 3:15, each turn is so beautiful that I find myself constantly wishing I were seeing this vid on a big screen.

**Brad:** There's no screen big enough for this vid.

**Nicky:** Lyric use is likewise inspired, owing in no small part to the ingenious narrator assignment noted previously. I particularly loved "this marble house I grew" in reference to the Doctor carving an existence for John out of nowhere.

**Brad:** There are times when the lyric ties wink at the viewer, but in a smart way, as with "It must be safe if it's on TV" at 4:00. That's even harder, in my opinion.

**Nicky:** It's a rare and magical moment when a vidder takes an esoteric lyric and really makes it *work* in the context of the vid, as is often the case in Marble House.

To wrap up, I wanted to especially take a moment to mention the lingering shot at 4:36 - 4:38 - just one shot of the Doctor staring at the camera, and the same technique a little later at 5:00 for the footage of the real WWI soldier. For a vidder, two seconds can pretty much be a lifetime. But hollywoodgrrl took those moments to focus on the emotional register of those shots for the final gut punch, and for me those are the master strokes to an already masterful vid.